

CLARE CONTINUES TO BLOOM IN 2007

County Clare, IRELAND, 23rd May 07 - Community groups, tidy village groups and residents associations across the County have been invited to compete in the '2007 Clare in Bloom' competition. Hosted by Clare County Council, the annual competition attracts a total prize fund in excess of EUR10,000 from sponsors including ESB Moneypoint, Shannon Development and Roche Ireland.

'Clare in Bloom', which attracted over 25 entries in 2006, is a motivational mechanism for many locally based groups throughout the County to enhance the usual impact of their settlements by means of flower, tree and shrub planting. Judging is scheduled to take place from mid-July to mid-August with a strong emphasis being placed on colour, variety, size, location and appropriateness of the various planting schemes, together with the management of litter.

The competition is based on 3 population categories. Category 1 caters for towns and villages with a population in excess of 700, Category 2 is for population centres of between 300 and 700 people and Category 3 features villages with a population less than 300.

Ballynacally Development Association scooped the overall award in 2006 as well as an award in Category 1, while Tuamgraney Development Association won in Category 2 and Kilrush Tidy Towns was successful in Category 3. A Special Endeavour Award went to Quin Development Company while the Mayor's Environmental Award, together with perpetual trophy for 2007, was awarded to Ballyvaughan Tidy Towns.

"Last year saw a great increase in the number of communities participating and I encourage more groups to get involved in 2007", stated Councillor Patricia McCarthy, Chairperson of the Environment and Emergency Services & Consumer Protection Strategic Policy Committee.

"The concept of promoting community involvement in the improvement and enhancement of the local environment has been developed and strengthened over the years by Clare County Council. One of the objectives of Clare County Council's 'Litter Management Plan 2006-2009' is to continue to work in partnership and co-operation with local voluntary and community groups, business, schools, residents associations, Gardaí and the citizens of County Clare in order to obtain a litter free environment", Cllr. McCarthy added.

Ms Betty Devanny, Clare in Bloom Co-ordinator explained, "This competition offers communities the opportunity to showcase the positive contribution that local groups make to the overall enhancement of their localities. It also further develops the tourism potential of the County."

Ms. Devanny added that a '**Best Public Seat Competition**' again complemented this year's 'Clare in Bloom' competition.

"If there is a public seat in a community where people can take time out and watch the world go by in pleasant surroundings, applicants can enter the 'Best Public Seat Competition'", she stated.

Communities and groups interested in participating in the '2007 Clare in Bloom' competition can access application forms from Clare County Council's Environment Section at 065-6846331 or www.clare.ie. The closing date for receipt of applications is 4p.m. on Friday, 8th June, 2007.